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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JACKY ROSEN, a Senator from the State of Nevada.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Gracious God, today accept the love and loyalty of our hearts. We are grateful for Your loving kindness and tender mercies.

Lord, we desire to please You by living for Your glory. Continue to bless our lawmakers. May they seek guidance from Your holy Word, permitting sacred precepts to provide lamps for their feet and light for their path. May this light also illuminate the road ahead for others who walk in darkness, so that Your will for our Nation and world may be done.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 23, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JACKY ROSEN, a Sen-

ator from the State of Nevada, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. ROSEN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

FOR THE PEOPLE ACT OF 2021

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, yesterday, the Senate was given an opportunity to begin debate on a subject that by all rights should be beyond debate: protecting the right to vote.

As we all know, Republican legislatures across the country are passing some of the most draconian restrictions on the right to vote in decades—a throwback to Jim Crow.

Every single Democrat yesterday voted to begin debate on legislation to fight back against this assault—and that is what it is, an assault on our democracy—every single one. It was the first time in this Congress that we have united all 50 Democrats on moving forward with strong and comprehensive voting rights legislation.

Senate Republicans, to the very last Member, voted against allowing the Senate to even have a debate on voting rights. Not a single Republican voted to move forward with a simple debate. In fact, the Republican leader went so far as to say that “regardless of what may be happening in some states”—voter suppression laws, phony audits, or the partisan takeover of election boards—he believes the Federal Gov-

ernment should not intervene. Who said that? Southern Senators from the Civil War all the way through said States’ rights—used as a tool to prevent particularly people of color from voting. And to invoke that in 2020? The majority leader is way off—way off base. It is disgraceful that he would even invoke that.

Yesterday’s vote was another piece of evidence that voter suppression is now part of the official platform of the Republican Party. But I want to be clear about one thing. As I said last night, the fight to protect voting rights is far, very far from over. Yesterday’s vote was the starting gun, not the finish line.

As the Senate majority leader, I reserve the right to bring up this issue for debate again. Yesterday was the first time we tried to consider major voting rights legislation, but it won’t be the last. Democrats will explore every option available to us for reconsidering legislation on this topic. We will leave no stone unturned. Voting rights are too important. The fight against modern-day voter suppression is just beginning.

One other point. Some of them like to make this point: Oh, this is just a partisan fight. Bull. This is a fight for the soul of America, and it shouldn’t be partisan, and it never was in the past. When legislatures try to prevent poor people, people of color, urban people, and young people from voting, that is not a political fight; that is what America is all about. So don’t try to hide under that guise.

It is Republican legislatures doing this. But in the past, when legislatures, usually in the South, tried to do these things—and in other places—both parties united to stop it. No more, sadly. Shame, shame, shame, shame on my Republican colleagues. This is a very bad day for them that history will recognize.

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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